DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 353 509 CG 024 727

AUTHOR Smalley, Regina; Stake, Jayne
TITLE The Gender Role/Self-Concept Link: Looking beyond the College Sophomore.
PUB DATE Aug 92
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (100th, Washington, DC, August 14-18, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; Personality Traits; *Self Concept; *Sex Role

ABSTRACT

Most of the research findings on the relationship between traditional gender-role traits and self-concept suggest that only traditionally masculine traits relate significantly to a positive self-concept for both males and females. This research has been limited in two ways. First, most studies have used student samples; second, most have used single-score measures of self-concept. The present study addresses those limitations by testing relationships between gender-role traits and a broad spectrum of components of self-concept in a noncollege sample of 104 women and 82 men. The results revealed that femininity consistently related to the Likability and Morality self-concept dimensions of the Six-Factor Self-Concept Scale; masculinity consistently related to the Task Accomplishment, Giftedness, Power, and Invulnerability dimensions of the Six-Factor Self-Concept Scale and to the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Texas Social Behavior Inventory. Support for the adaptive value of gender-congruent traits was more evident than in studies of college students. These results point to the need to expand the scope of samples studied and the range of self-concept dimensions considered to further understanding of relationships between gender-role adoption and self-concept. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED353509

CG024727

The Gender Role/Self-Concept Link:

Looking beyond the College Sophomore

Regina Smalley and Jayne Stake

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Regina Smalley
Jayne Stake

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Most of the research findings on the relationship between traditional gender-role traits and self-concept suggest that only traditionally masculine traits relate significantly to a positive self-concept for both males and females. This research has been limited in two ways. First, most studies have used student samples; second, most have used single-score measures of self-concept. The present study addresses those limitations by testing relationships between gender-role traits and a broad spectrum of components of self-concept in a noncollege sample of 104 women and 82 men. Femininity consistently related to the Likability and Morality self-concept dimensions; masculinity consistently related to the Task Accomplishment, Giftedness, Power and Invulnerability dimensions and to the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Texas Social Behavior Inventory. Support for the adaptive value of gender-congruent traits was more evident than in studies of college students. These results point to the need to expand the scope of samples studied and the range of self-concept dimensions considered to further our understanding of relationships between gender-role adoption and self-concept.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Gender Role/Self-Concept Link: Looking beyond the College Sophomore

Regina Smalley and Jayne Stake

University of Missouri-St. Louis

Much attention has been focused in the past 15 years on the relationship between gender-role adoption and measures of self-concept. Although Bem (1974) predicted that the androgynous individual would demonstrate a better adjustment than either gender-stereotyped or cross-typed individuals, the bulk of research findings suggest that only traditionally masculine traits are consistently and substantially related to a positive self-concept for either men or women (Bailey, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1987; Cate & Sugawara, 1986; Marsh, Antill, & Cunningham, 1987; Taylor & Hall, 1982; Whitley, 1983).

This research has been limited in two important respects. First, most studies have utilized broad, single score measures of self-evaluation. The few studies that have tested more than one dimension of self-concept suggest that the relationship between gender-role adoption and self-concept depends on the component of self-concept tested (Flaherty & Dusak, 1980; Marsh, 1987; Orlofsky & O'Heron, 1987). Traditionally feminine traits have been more closely related than traditionally masculine traits to self-evaluations of functioning in the communal realm (e.g. sociability, quality of peer relationships). Hence, single score measures have obscured the importance of traditionally feminine traits for some aspects of self-concept. A second limitation of previous gender role/self-concept research is that few studies have included nonstudent adults, and no studies, to our knowledge, have tested nonstudent adults with multidimensional measures of self-concept. The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between gender-related traits and a broad spectrum of components of self-concept in a noncollege adult sample.

Methods

Subjects

Participants were 104 women and 82 men who were contacted through 1) door-to-door solicitation in a middle to lower middle class neighborhood in a midwestern surburban city and 2) an informal network of acquaintances and acquaintances of acquaintances known to the first author. The socioeconomic status of all participants was middle or lower middle class. The racial identification of participants was: African American (9.63%), White nonHispanic (87.70%), and other (2.65%). The age composition of the sample was: 19-21 (11.83%), 22-25 (15.59%), 26-30 (11.29%), 31-40 (27.42%), 41-50 (19.89%), and over 50 (13.44%). Highest education level attained was: high school diploma (27.47%), 2-year college degree (23.08%), 4-year college degree (19.12%), advanced college degree (17.58%). Gender groups did not differ significantly in racial composition, age, or educational level.

Measures

Traditionally masculine and feminine traits were measured with the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975) and Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI, 1974). Self-concept was measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), the Texas Social Behavior Inventory (TSBI; Helmreich & Stapp, 1974), and the Six-Factor Self-Concept Scale (Stake, 1991). The six subscales of the latter scale measure self-evaluations in the following areas: (a) Likability--the capacity to foster pleasant and enjoyable relations with others; (b) Morality--qualities generally valued as good and virtuous; (c) Task Accomplishment--the ability to efficiently and capably manage and accomplish tasks; (d) Giftedness--innate, natural talents, as distinct from current abilities or accomplishments; (e) Power--qualities of strength, leadership, and persuasiveness; and (f) Vulnerability--difficulty performing

under pressure and self-criticalness. Scoring of the Vulnerability subscale was reversed so that scores represent self-evaluations of invulnerability. Hence, higher scores on all subscales are associated with more positive self-evaluations. Alpha coefficients for the subscales have ranged from .64 to .86, and test-retest reliabilities from .74 to .88 after four weeks. Factorial composition of the subscales was confirmed with a noncollege adult sample (n=365). Subscales have differentially predicted measures of current and previous life events associated with their respective domains. More complete information on the psychometric properties of the scale is available in Stake (1991).

Results and Discussion

A series of regression analyses were undertaken to test relationships between measures of gender role traits and self-concept. Before testing these relationships, gender trait items that were close in meaning to self-concept items were removed to avoid spuriously high correlations between measures. One item from the BSRI and two from the PAQ were deleted in analyses with the TSBI; six items from the BSRI and two from the PAQ were deleted in analyses of the Six-Factor subscales. In the first set of regression analyses, the PAQ scales of positive feminine traits and positive masculine traits served as predictors of self-concept scores. Women and men were tested separately so that effect sizes could be determined for each gender group. The interaction of masculine and feminine traits was not tested because previous research has not found this term to be predictive of self-concept measures (e.g., Marsh, 1987; Orlofsky & O'Heron, 1987; Taylor & Hall, 1982). Masculinity and Femininity scores for the BSRI were tested in parallel regression analyses. Results of the PAQ analyses appear in Table 1 and results of the BSRI analyses in Table 2. Effect sizes are in the low to moderate range. As expected, relationships between gender role traits and self-concept depended on the self-concept component tested.

For both women and men, PAQ and BSRI Femininity scores were positively and significantly related to Likability and Morality; PAQ and BSRI Masculinity scores were positively and significantly related to Rosenberg, TSBI, Power, Giftedness, Invulnerability, and Task Accomplishment scores. However, gender differences in effect sizes were evident. Femininity scores were more positively related to self-concept measures for women than men in 9 of the 11 comparisons in which Femininity was related to self-concept; Masculinity scores were more positively related to self-concept measures for men than women in 12 of the 16 possible comparisons.

These findings provide support for the value of traditionally feminine traits for the development of a positive self-concept in the areas of morality and personal relating. Furthermore, the results suggest that gender role congruence may be more closely related to a positive self-concept in adults outside the school setting. These findings may be explained by greater pressures on adults outside school settings for conformance to traditional gender roles. Females and males have many similar experiences within the school setting--with the same work assignments, grading system, and criteria for success--whereas noncollege adults may often be in settings where expectations and rewards for being gender-role congruent are stronger than in school settings. More generally, the results of the present study point to the importance of environmental setting and life circumstance as a factor in the link between adoption of traditional gender roles and self-concept. Future studies should further explore this issue by expanding the scope of samples studied as well as the range of self-concept dimensions considered.

References

Bailey, W. C., Hendrick, C., & Hendrick, S. S. (1987). Relation of sex and gender role to love, sexual attitudes, and self-esteem. Sex Roles, 16, 1987.

Bem, S. L. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 42, 155-162.

Cate, R., & Sugawara, A. I. (1986). Sex-role orientation and dimensions of self-esteem among middle adolescents. Sex Roles, 15, 145-158.

Flaherty, J. F., & Dusek, J. B. (1980). An investigation of the relationship between psychological androgyny and components of self-concept. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38, 984-992.

Helmreich, R., & Stapp, J. (1974). Short forms of The Texas Social Behavior Inventory, an objective measure of self-esteem. Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society, 4, 473-475.

Marsh, H. W. (1987). Masculinity, femininity and androgyny: Their relations with multiple dimensions of self-concept. Multivariate Behavioral Research, 22, 91-118.

Marsh, H. W., Antill, J. K., & Cunningham, J. D. (1987). Masculinity, femininity, and androgyny: Relations to self-esteem and social desirability. Journal of Personality, 55, 661-683.

Orlofsky, J. L., & O'Heron, C. A. (1987). Stereotypic and nonstereotypic sex role trait and behavior orientations: Implications for personal adjustment. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52, 1034-1042.

Rosenberg, M. (1965). Society and the adolescent self-image. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Spence, J. T., Helmreich, R., & Stapp, J. (1975). Ratings of self and peers on sex role attributes and their relation to self-esteem and conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Journal of Personality and Social

Psychology, 32, 29-39.

Stake, J. E. (1991). Development and validation of the six-factor self-concept scale. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Taylor, M. C., & Hall, J. A. (1982). Psychological androgyny: Theories, methods, and conclusions. Psychological Bulletin, 92, 347-366.

Whitley, B. E., Jr. (1983). Sex role orientation and self-esteem: A critical meta-analytic review. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 44, 765-778.

Table 1

Relationship of Traditionally Feminine and Masculine Traits to Self-Concept: Personal Attributes Questionnaire

	Traditionally feminine traits		Traditionally masculine traits	
Self-concept	F	Effect size	F	Effect size
Women subjects				
Rosenberg	ns		48.83****	.57
TSBI	6.75**	.25	23.52****	.44
Likability	27.44****	.47	ns	
Morality	21.51****	.42	ns	
Task Accomplishment	3.16*	.18	44.59****	.56
Giftedness	ns		8.59***	.28
Power	ns		34.65****	.51
Invulnerability	ns		21.96****	.43
Men subjects				
Rosenberg	ns		48.28****	.62
TSBI	ns		49.94****	.62
Likability	5.09**	.25	7.52***	.30
Morality	5.72**	.26	13.13****	.38
Task Accomplishment	ns		20.95****	.46
Giftedness	3.97**	.22	7.53***	.29
Power	7.18***[a]	.29	25.43****	.49
Invulnerability	7.35***[a]	.29	27.66****	.51

[a]Direction of effect is negative.

*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$. ****$p < .001$.

Table 2

Relationship of Traditional Feminine and Masculine Traits to Self-Concept: Bem Sex Role Questionnaire

	Traditionally feminine traits		Traditionally masculine traits	
Self-concept	F	Effect size	F	Effect size
Women subjects				
Rosenberg	ns		19.74****	.41
TSBI	ns		57.59****	.61
Likability	22.85****	.44	15.37****	.37
Morality	26.44****	.46	ns	
Task Accomplishment	ns		28.45****	.23
Giftedness	ns		38.04****	.53
Power	6.52**a	.25	68.60****	.65
Invulnerability	18.79****a	.40	13.90****	.36
Men subjects				
Rosenberg	ns		48.49****	.62
TSBI	ns		61.53****	.66
Likability	10.52***	.34	18.24****	.43
Morality	9.63***	.33	16.16****	.41
Task Accomplishment	ns		28.88****	.52
Giftedness	ns		9.65***	.33
Power	10.66***a	.34	54.48****	.64
Invulnerability	9.64***a	.33	33.04****	.54

[a]Direction of effect is negative.

*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$. ****$p < .001$.